

SELECTED ABSTRACTS FOR CSDI 2006 (alphabetical by first mentioned author)

**Guidelines for Best Practice in Cross-Cultural Surveys**

Kirsten Alcser, Judith Clemens, Beth-Ellen Pennell, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan  
Janet Harkness, University of Nebraska and ZUMA  
Peter Ph. Mohler, ZUMA

The number and scope of multi-cultural, multi-national surveys has grown significantly over the past decade. Much is yet to be learned about how best survey practices in a mono-cultural setting can best be appropriately adapted to a multi-cultural setting. This presentation will outline a process for gathering, integrating, and documenting best practices and guidelines for cross-cultural survey research. It is anticipated that when complete, the guidelines will cover the following topics: contracts, ethics, sampling, questionnaire development, translation, computer assisted instrument development, pretesting, interviewer training, data collection, quality control, post production, analysis, documentation, and data dissemination. Given the lack of source documents available that specifically address these aspects of cross-cultural survey research, it is anticipated that these guidelines will adapt and change over time as methodological research addresses these issues.

**Little things sometimes matter**

*Rene Bautista, Ana Villar, David Palmer, Janet Harkness, University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Francisco Abundis, Parametria, Mexico*

In cross-cultural surveys, poorly translated questionnaires may result in wording effects that reduce comparability. This paper addresses differences among translated versions of the same set of questions from English into several different standard forms of Spanish. We report findings from an experiment conducted in 2005 using questions from the Chilean, Spanish and Mexican translations the 2002 ISSP "Family and Changing Gender Roles III" survey. Differences in question wording were found across these versions. Due to limitations in the sample size possible, the experiment contrasted only two translations in each case. Native speakers of Spanish (but bilingual) were used as informants in order to decide which questions to select for the experiment. A rough working distinction was made between translations felt to be more stilted or un-Spanish in some respect and translations which seemed more "normal", that is, more like ordinary language usage. Six pairs of questions were used in a split ballot study carried out in Mexico by *Parametria* with a nationwide probabilistic sample (N 1,100). Preliminary results indicate that, for some questions, the effect of stilted or inappropriate translations can result in an aggregate shift from 3 to 10 points in the marginal distributions. On the other hand, in some instances when translation were felt to be stilted or inappropriate, there were no differences in distributions. The findings are discussed and possible explanations considered.

## **Improving questionnaires for interculturally comparative surveys: the use of probing questions**

Michael Braun, ZUMA, MAnnheim

For selected ISSP gender-role items and egalitarian variants of these evidence from probing questions is presented (unfortunately only for Germany) on how different segments of the population understand and react to the items. The results are interpreted in tandem with results from internationally comparative quantitative surveys (ISSP and a additional 5-county study). Predictions on how the working of some of the standard survey items might change in the future are made and possible remedies discussed.

## **Use of Interpreters in Telephone Interviews**

Laura Branden, Westat, Rockville

While the use of interpreters to conduct interviews increases participation of individuals, concern exists about how their use may affect data quality. As a result, most non-English non-Spanish speakers are excluded from survey participation. Interpreters were used to help conduct telephone interviews with child care providers for the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort. Building on work done by Edwards (2004), 29 telephone interviews conducted using interpreters were tape recorded. Behavior coding was conducted on the three-way interaction between the interviewer, interpreter, and respondent. Results of the behavior coding show that the interpreter successfully interpreted key concepts of the questions 89 percent of the time and correctly interpreted answers 96 percent of the time. The use of interpreters reduced the number of cases that were finalized as nonresponse with little compromise to data quality.

## **Cross-cultural comparability of physical activity measurements: Are those differences real?**

Stef van Buuren, Gert Jacobusse, J-P Fox

The European EUPASS project developed a cross-cultural questionnaire for measuring the physical activity. In order to achieve comparability across countries, the project used the International Physical Activity Questionnaires (IPAQ), an instrument designed to be used internationally to obtain comparable estimates of physical activity. The EUPASS study shows very large differences between countries. After accounting for DIF through a multilevel analysis, substantial differences still remain. The question of interest is whether these are 'real' differences between countries, or artifacts of the data collection methodology.

## **Multi-National Cognitive Testing: Development of an interview protocol for conducting comparative analyses of question-response problems**

Kristen Miller (National Center for Health Statistics), Gordon Willis (National Cancer Institute) & Alisú Schoua-Glusberg (Research Support Services)

This paper describes a cognitive interviewing project to test health-related survey questions for use in a global context. In the discussion, the paper will first articulate both the *practical objectives* of the project (to produce good survey questions for a global effort) and the *research-related objectives* of the project (to examine the impact of socio-cultural phenomena on the question-response process). Additionally, the paper will discuss the type of cognitive interview data required to conduct comparative analyses for both practical and theoretical gain as well as present the challenges to collecting such data among disparate economic and cultural contexts.

Discussion will focus on the use of a mixed method approach developed by the authors to conduct comparative analyses of cognitive interviews. The method incorporates both in-depth, emergent probing techniques as well as prescribed probing questions that provide insight into respondents' comprehension and cognitive processing of survey items. Somewhat unique to this method, interviews are coded, allowing for both quantitative and qualitative comparative analyses, including the ways in which socio-cultural factors (e.g. language, cultural values and tradition, socio-economic status and geographic region) might impact the survey response process. Codes are based on a question-response model, depicting (1) the respondent's interpretations of key terms, (2) the process for making judgments and decisions, and (3) the presence of response error and response error type. Finally, the paper will describe how the mixed-method approach best attends to the constraints of cross-national cognitive testing with examples from applications of the method in Mexico and in several African countries.

### **Expanding our Tool Kit of Cognitive Interview Techniques for use with Spanish Survey Instruments**

Patricia Goerman  
U.S. Census Bureau, SRD

The cognitive interview is a widely accepted method for pretesting survey instruments. In recent years, there have been increasing amounts of methodological research on best practices for conducting cognitive interviews (Presser, et al. (eds.), 2004; Willis, 2005). The increasing need for multi-cultural and multi-lingual surveys throughout the world has brought new methodological issues to light. There has been a great deal of discussion of the importance of ensuring that different language versions of the same survey are asking equivalent questions of respondents (Harkness, et al. (eds.), 2003). Pretesting, including cognitive interviews, can be an essential tool in this process (Willis, et al., forthcoming). Despite an awareness of the desirability of pretesting multiple language versions of surveys, there's been very little methodological research on how to best go about this process.

Many researchers in the U.S. have documented difficulties in conducting cognitive interviews with non-English speaking respondents. This paper describes the methodology and preliminary results of a U.S. Census Bureau study designed to document difficulties and challenges encountered in conducting cognitive interviews with Spanish-speaking respondents. Monolingual, Spanish-speaking respondents of Mexican origin of both high and low educational levels have been interviewed using either widely accepted or more experimental cognitive interview techniques.

On the whole, this study will offer a method to tailor the cognitive interview process to a specific cultural or linguistic group. In addition, it will offer a description of new techniques that can be added to the cognitive interviewer's "tool kit" of interviewing strategies.

### **Cognitive interviewing when the researcher does not speak the target language.**

Patricia Gallagher

Center for Survey Research at the University of Massachusetts Boston

There is very little information available about how best to utilize and learn from cognitive interviewers conducting testing in languages in which the researcher is not fluent. I am hoping to use this time as an opportunity to discuss this challenging issue with this knowledgeable group. Some issues I hope will be addressed during the discussion include: What are your experiences with identifying appropriate "Second Language" cognitive interviewers? Must interviewers always be social scientists or will specially-trained bi-lingual interviewers also serve the purpose? How is it possible to maximize the information transfer from interviewers to researchers when there is seldom time or resources for translation of the interviews? What is the optimal number [or at least the pragmatic number] of cognitive interviews and interviewers for a project?

### **Concepts for handling metadata in repeated cross-national studies**

Reto Hadorn, SIDOS, Neuchatel Switzerland

At the 'end' of a replicated study, we ideally get a cumulative file made of the integrated datasets made for each wave. This is possible because some control is exerted for warranting consistency across the participating units (countries) and over time.

The whole set of data and metadata can be considered under two distinct perspectives:

- Prospectively: the redundancy in the whole set of metadata should be used to support economical capture and handling of metadata; structuring the relationships between questions, resp. variables on the way, the production of detailed metadata for the final cumulated-integrated dataset should be largely automated.
- Retrospectively: from the final metadata of the cumulated-integrated dataset, the user should be capable of going back to the variations, which had to be harmonized.

Instead of asking how to document complex data quasi ex post, this approach takes the wax of building the complex relationships between questions and variables over space (countries) and time (waves) step by step. Caring appropriately for the definition of data (prospective view) we get documentation without having to 'document' the data.

Which kind of software would be capable of giving that support?

Which kind of social organization of data collection would be necessary for using that software appropriately?

## **The challenge of developing cross-culturally valid health questionnaires for multiethnic survey research: two case studies from Scotland**

Dr. Lisa Hanna, Professor Raj Bhopal, Dr. Sonja Hunt, Community Health Sciences, University of Edinburgh

This paper presents data from two research projects investigating the cross-cultural comparability of key questionnaires used in multi-ethnic health survey research.

### **Case study 1: The Rose Angina Questionnaire**

The Rose Angina Questionnaire is commonly used to assess coronary heart disease prevalence in a population. It has been widely applied internationally and in multiethnic survey work in the UK, but little research has been carried out on the cultural or linguistic appropriateness of translated versions. We trained bilingual project workers to carry out qualitative, in-depth interviews with lay members of Pakistani and Chinese communities in Scotland in order to assess existing translations of the questionnaire. This process identified a number of important errors in the translation and cross-cultural adaptation of the Rose Angina Questionnaire- key examples will be presented and discussed.

### **Case study 2: Tobacco-related questionnaires**

Previous research carried out by our team indicated that existing UK surveys on tobacco use in ethnic minorities may have been methodologically flawed with regards to questionnaire translation and adaptation. We will report on the use of interview and discussion group techniques to develop and produce comprehensive, cross-culturally valid and comparable questionnaires in Cantonese, Punjabi, Sylheti and Urdu. Lay monolinguals identified cultural and linguistic inaccuracies in existing questionnaires and suggested acceptable alternatives. Illustrative examples will be given. Issues relating to culturally specific response tendencies, and to the production of standardised questionnaires in oral languages for which there is no written equivalent such as Cantonese and Sylheti, will be discussed and solutions presented.

In conclusion, we argue that results of health-related surveys using inadequately translated and adapted questionnaires must be interpreted with caution. Lay people from communities being surveyed must be closely consulted throughout questionnaire development in order to ensure cross-cultural validity of findings and avoid artefactual results. To carry out robust survey research across ethnic groups, epidemiological and health researchers need to be aware of the challenges of language and culture, and of methodological best practice.

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### **Questions raised by oral translation in survey research**

Janet Harkness, ZUMA, Germany, Nicole Schoebi, SIDOS, Switzerland, Dominique Joye, SIDOS, Switzerland, Peter Mohler, ZUMA, Timo Faass, ZUMA, Germany.

At CSDI 2006, the presentation focuses not on our substantive findings (which are soon to be published) but on the methodological questions that these findings

raise, for example, about quality control, comparability and question design in multilingual surveys.

Oral translations are used frequently in some telephone surveys to interview respondents unable to be interviewed in the language(s) in which a written questionnaire is available. Interviewers may also call translation service vendors to match language needs of respondents. In this way, within and across countries, interviewers or translators can be matched to locations called and/or sample unit reached. However, oral translations change the data collection process in ways that put data quality and data comparability at risk. Data from an experiment conducted in Germany and Switzerland indicate that the questions asked in orally translated interviews differed considerably from interviews in which a written version of the questions was available. Interviewer outputs reflected problems inherent in trying to translate orally while engaging in a dialogue (cognitive burden, memory, adapting to interaction) but also highlighted problems inherent in the source questions and challenges faced in survey translation. The research suggests that the use of oral translations in survey research needs to be reviewed and procedures re-considered. At CSDI our presentation focuses not on our findings (which are soon to be published) but on the questions that these findings raise, for example, about quality control, comparability and question design.

### **The Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik/Warner-Matrix for Measuring Education in Cross-National Comparison**

Juergen H.P. Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik (ZUMA, Mannheim) and Uwe Warner (CEPS/Instead, Differdange)

Education is the basic variable constituting social inequality. Therefore education is one of the most important socio-economic variables even in national as well as cross-national survey research.

Comparing different national educational systems one has first to analyze these educational systems to find out structural similarities and/or equivalences in different national educational systems. The presentation will demonstrate the process from national structure of educational system to international measurement instrument.

The Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik/Warner-Matrix (HZ/W-Matrix) for measure education in cross-national comparison is combining general and vocational degrees. The basic idea of ranking education is the theoretical progression of education in direction of the ideal education for reaching a specific occupational position or occupational prestige. The HZ/W-Matrix is grouping together 10 combinations of degrees with the similar prestige. The instrument was tested in three very different educational systems. Misclassification nearly is impossible and the HZ/W-Matrix is highly correlated with ISCED-77 (International Standard Classification of Educations 1977) and with years of schooling.

### **The Devil is in the Details: How to Ensure Compliance and Minimize Deviance in Comparative Surveys**

Ineke Stoop (SCP), Achim Koch, Annelies Blom (ZUMA)

The European Social Survey aims at optimal comparability. In order to achieve this, detailed specifications for fieldwork have been drafted, expert panels give guidance on sampling and translation, several monitoring tools are in place, and

data protocols show how data should be delivered. Despite these measures, which are more extensive and detailed than in most cross-national surveys, deviances occurred in many countries and other deviances would have occurred if the initial national proposals for fieldwork had been carried out.

These deviances do not only occur in cross-national surveys but also in national surveys. They are more serious in the former case, however, as they endanger optimal comparability. The presentation will focus on different types of deviances, on the reasons why these tend to occur and on how they can be minimized.

### **Mismatch between educational investments and returns on the level of occupations. Discussion of an ongoing research project**

Christof Wolf

Occupations hold a typical prestige, they are connected with a typical income and they require a typical amount of education. We consider the latter as an investment and the former two as profits or returns stemming from the investment. We can express this view by the following two equations:

$$\text{Income}_{\text{occ}} = b_0 + b_1 \text{Education}_{\text{occ}} + \text{Residual-Income}_{\text{occ}}$$

$$\text{Prestige}_{\text{occ}} = d_0 + d_1 \text{Education}_{\text{occ}} + \text{Residual-Prestige}_{\text{occ}}$$

Typical or mean income and prestige of an occupation are seen as depending on the education held by those pursuing the occupation. Of course this relationship will not be perfect so we allow for a term reflecting income or prestige that cannot be accounted for by education. What interests us here is exactly this residual, i.e. the extra or deficit income (prestige) an occupation yields that cannot be accounted for by the typical educational investment made by the incumbents of the occupation. This residual will be called economic and prestige return of an occupation.

With respect to these measures we try to answer the following questions:

Which occupations have especially high and which especially low return property?

Do people in low and high return occupations differ with respect to socioeconomic characteristics?

And finally, do incumbents of low and high return occupations differ with respect to attitudes towards social inequality? These questions will be addressed using the 1999 International Social Survey Programme Module on Social Inequality.